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OF THE

LIEUTENANTS OF THE ROYAL NAVY.

MY LORD, or SIR,

IT is presumed, that whatever relates to the *Navy of Great Britain*, cannot be a matter of indifference to a Member of the British Senate; under that idea, this Address, and the papers accompanying it, explanatory of some late transactions, relative to the Lieutenants of His Majesty's Fleet, and their actual distressful situation, is most respectfully submitted to your consideration.

Ten years ago, the Lieutenants, impelled by their necessitous circumstances, and the smallness of their pay, attempted to appeal to the humanity and justice of Parliament for an increase. Their intentions were frustrated, and as the voice of their distress did not reach the power which could give relief, they were still doomed to suffer. The Filazer's Office, and the Prison Books throughout the kingdom, can best elucidate the consequences.

It would be superfluous and impertinent to enter into a detail of the general operation of the national debt upon the income of individuals, to a Representative of the People. It is only necessary to entreat their attention to the vast increase of that debt; its effect upon the very scanty pay of a naval Lieutenant; and the consequent accumulation of difficulty since the period of their former intended application. It will not be deemed improper here to remark, that the power of the Lieutenant to procure for himself and family the necessaries for their existence, diminishes in an exact proportion to the increase of taxation, as he cannot, like men in the other classes of society, increase the income allowed to him. From the landholder to the common mechanic and daily-labourer, all possess within themselves a remedy to meet the evil. Their sufferings as servants of the crown and of the public, did not prevent their coming forward with the utmost alacrity on the commencement of the present war, under all the difficulties and disadvantages which attend their emerging from retirement and obscurity. It cannot be supposed that the advantage of *one shilling per day*, could have operated as an inducement; the chance of prize-money is a casualty scarce worth mentioning; it is like one of the superior capitals in a lottery; and who would not condemn the man that would run into distress for the risque of obtaining it? Preference is so partial a consideration, unless by as great a casualty as the prize-money, that it cannot be brought into the scale as a motive. It is hoped, therefore, that their alacrity will be imputed to a more real, just and honorable consideration; a sense of duty, and a love of their country.

As a corps, it is conceived it will not be denied that they have sustained a full share in the activity, the assiduity, the toils, and the dangers which have marked the conduct, and attended the prowess of the British Fleet; and, they trust they will be allowed to glory in the portion they may claim of that honor which has thence attached to it; and which has been proclaimed to the world, by the voice of the Senate, and of their gracious Master from his throne. He has given honorable testimony in his Speech at the opening of the present Session, wherein he has said,

" In reviewing the events of the year, you will have observed, that by the skill and exertions of my Navy, our extensive and increasing commerce has been protected to a degree almost beyond example, and the fleets of the enemy have, for the greatest part of the year, been blocked up in their own ports."

Sensible of past misfortune and in dread of still increasing distress; in the month of July last, meetings of the corps were held, and an humble representation of their grievances was prepared to be presented to Parliament, and signed by a large number of the corps, on behalf of the whole, as their dispersion in various fleets, and different parts of the world, rendered it impossible to collect the signatures of the majority. Committees were established for conducting the business, by receiving signatures and corresponding. It has so happened, that the Committee established at Portsmouth were induced hastily to change the mode adopted and agreed to by all the rest of the officers who had signed, and were persuaded to relinquish what the general sentiment of the corps conceives to be the regular and constitutional mode of seeking redress, a Petition to Parliament; and instead thereof to memorial the Admiralty. A letter had been addressed to Earl Spencer, the head of that Board, and one of His Majesty's Council, to solicit his support, and requesting his influence to procure an introduction of their Petition by a message from His Majesty. Lord Hugh Seymour Conway, another member of the Admiralty Board, was also solicited by letter, to honor the Lieutenants, by presenting their Petition. They considered these circumstances as a due respect paid by them to the Admiralty; but, they considered also, that, as a Board, the Admiralty had not power to remedy their grievances, and could only recommend the consideration of their case to His Majesty's Council. From the necessary applications to Parliament for supplies, to answer the public exigencies, whatever favorable inclinations Administration might have to relieve the distress of the Lieutenants; they must, in a great measure, be counteracted by the natural desire to avoid increasing the amount of that sum it might be necessary to demand, although in the grand Scale the sum requisite for their relief would be an insignificant item. The Lieutenants therefore thought they could not depend so much upon the generosity of Administration, as on the well known liberality of the national Representatives. It is not on this account extraordinary that with all deference and respect to the Admiralty, they should have preferred and adopted an application to Parliament; independant of their conceiving it the most proper and regular mode of proceeding. The event has proved that their apprehensions were not ill-founded; for although neither the Admiralty nor Administration were insensible to the well-grounded complaints of the Lieutenants; nor turned a deaf ear to their solicitations; yet the following arrangements will shew that a too rigid economy guided their determination, and the relief was administered with so sparing and parsimonious a hand, as to afford but a small benefit to a few, and leave the many in the same state of penury and distress in which they were previously involved.

The Substance of the new Arrangement is as follows.

WAR, or FULL PAY ESTABLISHMENT.

One Shilling in addition to the existing Pay of 4s. to every Lieutenant employed.

Sixpence per day, in addition to the above shilling, to all Lieutenants of Flag Ships, and of ships bearing by Admiralty authority, the broad pendant of a Commodore with a Captain under him.

Lieutenants commanding His Majesty's armed Cutters, Luggers, and Vessels of a similar class, duly registered on the Naval List, to be allowed two servants each; *but those commanding hired vessels, only one, as at present.*

Lieutenants on being first called into service are to be allowed travelling expences from the place at which they shall be, when appointed to their ships, at the rate of Sixpence a mile, upon their making oath that they took the shortest road to join their ships; *but that such allowance be not made oftener than once in the course of an armament or war, to the same officer.*

PEACE, or HALF-PAY ESTABLISHMENT.

Fifty instead of thirty Lieutenants at a Pension of Six Shillings per day, and to retire with the Rank of Commander.

The first one hundred Lieutenants on the list, to have Five Shillings per day each.

The next one hundred to have Three Shillings and Sixpence per day each.

The remainder to have Three Shillings as at present.

The Lieutenants who have become Poor Knights of Windsor, under the Will of Mr. Travers, are excluded from the benefit of Superannuation, or the Five Shillings per day.

It might be presumed, that when the full and half-pay were settled a Century back, it was then thought to be a sum, by which the Lieutenant could support himself, in a manner somewhat becoming the situation he held in His Majesty's service; to suppose it more would be to deem it an unthrifty and needless expenditure of the public money.

The contrary, however, is an authenticated historical fact. The first establishment by King William was then deemed an inadequate provision; the subsequent reduction to Four Shillings full pay, and Two Shillings half pay, was loudly reprobated; and it is recorded, that it was with the greatest reluctance his Majesty was prevailed upon to sign the order. If, at that period, the pay was deemed incompetent, that incompetency must have, gradually, increased by the operation of the taxes upon the value of the pay, exactly in proportion to the difference between *Twenty-five Millions*, the amount of the national debt at that time, and *Four Hundred and Fifty Millions*, the amount at the present period. The additional shilling to the Half Pay, granted about thirty years ago, by no means restored the pay to its original value, after a constant increment in the value of money, for a term of about seventy years; and even if it had, the decrement in the value of that pay, in the course of the last thirty years, being at least equal to one hundred per cent. from the increased price of every article of life, renders the additional shilling a nullity, and reduces the pay to the value it was of, at the end of the period of seventy years from the time of the reduction. As the present Three Shillings nominal pay is, by deductions, rendered only Two Shillings and Tenpence clear pay per day; the fact is, that the Two Shillings and Tenpence at this time is evidently only equal to what was the real value of One Shilling and Tenpence in the year 1725, or 1726. What then is to become of those who receive no addition to their present Half-Pay? or even the trifling number who are to have an additional sixpence; and there are, perhaps, EIGHTEEN HUNDRED at least, out of upwards of TWO THOUSAND, who have not the least prospect even to obtain the Five Shilling List by the course of nature. It was to an ample increase of the Half Pay more particularly, that the views of the Lieutenants were directed in their intended application to Parliament. Had a general increase been made to the Half Pay, so as to have given a comfortable subsistence; it is highly probable that the very inadequate addition to the Full Pay, with even the partial saving in the travelling charges, would not have occasioned that great discontent which universally prevails respecting the War Establishment. Men would have considered, that it is, probably, to last but for a small period; and amongst the other hardships they have to encounter, they would, without murmuring, have passed over their pecuniary difficulties. What, however, must be their feelings when they look forward to the prospect of Peace—gladdening to every heart but theirs.—To the nation it brings prosperity and wealth; to them, penury and distress. The Merchant, Manufacturer, Tradesman, &c. will experience the happy consequence, an increase of trade and property. They are hereby recompensed for their past losses and disappointments. What is the remuneration of the Lieutenant for his public service? He must, whenever the war ends, retire unavoidably encumbered with debt, as the circumstances mentioned in the intended Petition sufficiently evidence. What are his prospects?—a prison for himself, and a family to support upon a pittance which does not equal a third of the income of many shoe-blacks in the streets of London. Let the remuneration for the services of the second Officer in one of the Ships of a Navy which sets all Europe at defiance, be compared with that of a menial servant to a private Gentleman. What a contrast, when the situations and nature of the services are considered! How is the distressed Lieutenant to prevent the dreaded consequence? He has only one means; that means will be adopted by hundreds; nay, it is publicly spoken of as the only resource. It is EMIGRATION;—to seek for that livelihood in foreign states which their own country denies them. This may thin the List, and make room for patronage to fill the vacancies; but will the country approve of those who have deserved well of it, by their services, and the difficulties and dangers they have encountered in war, being thus driven into exile, in time of Peace? Can it be supposed that men will be so mad to think of entering or continuing in a service with such an example before their eyes?

Their Royal Master, at the same time that he so strongly stated the important services rendered by the Navy to the trade and commerce of the kingdom, gave the most flattering testimony of the general benefit resulting therefrom, by the following declaration.

"It is a great satisfaction to me to observe, that notwithstanding the temporary embarrassments which have been experienced, the state of the commerce, manufactures and revenue of the country, proves the real extent and solidity of our resources, and furnishes you such means as must be equal to any exertions which the present crisis may require."

The words of their Sovereign delivered from the throne, the Lieutenants cannot but look upon as sacred truth. On these and the humanity of the National Representatives, they still ground a hope of a more competent and general relief. If the flourishing state of the kingdom, its trade and commerce are such as to render its resources (as His Majesty declares) equal to the exigencies of the present crisis, after a war of near four years; it must necessarily follow, that in the hour of peace, when the vast expences of a war have ceased; when an increase of trade must, of consequence, produce an increase of wealth and power; a sum which (in addition to the late grant by His Majesty in Council,) would be sufficient to give the most ample and satisfactory relief, could not operate as a burthen; it could be scarce felt by the nation at large, but be an object of small consideration. It may probably be asserted, without the hazard of a doubt, that the hearts and purses of the people would be open to administer to the absolute wants of any body of men forming a part of the British Navy. It is hoped this will be admitted as an answer to any objection that might be made, on the foundation of the incapacity of the nation, to afford a competent provision.

But

But as facts speak for themselves, and are the most incontestable arguments ; it may not be amiss to observe, that, *at this very period, an augmentation has been made to the salaries of Clerks of all denominations, in the vicequalling department, and that to a great extent, being in a proportion equal to TWO FIFTHS upon their former salaries. Those lately upon 50l. per annum are increased to 70l. 5; and this even if they have not been a month in employment.*

This naturally leads to a consideration of the comparative situations of the Lieutenant and the Clerk in Office, and their respective official duties. It may then be asked, if Men ought not to be rewarded for their public service, according to the nature of the service they render ? If this is admitted, it must be allowed, that the value of the services, as it respects the individuals who perform them, will not bear comparison.

It will not be impertinent to remark, that as the Lieutenant is expected, in his conduct, to demean himself, in all things, as a Gentleman, and is amenable to martial law, should he deviate, and act unbecoming the character of an Officer, that is, in fact, of a Gentleman, he certainly should have the appointments of a Gentleman ; so far, at least, as are necessary for the suitable and proper support and appearance of that character. It is further presumed, that no objection can possibly arise on the ground of the extension of the Naval List. If the circumstances of the war, and the hitherto unequalled magnitude of the British Fleet, made such an extension necessary ; it would be, surely, unfair to allege that the number of Officers, absolutely requisite for the service, should be an obstacle to all of them being properly supported, and receiving an adequate remuneration for their services.

A most cruel and unfair insinuation has been propagated, as a reason for the Half Pay not being increased ; namely, that if the situation of the Officers was made comfortable in time of peace, they would not come forward when called upon, at the commencement of a war. They will not suppose that such an idea could originate with Administration, or with the Admiralty, though the new arrangement would certainly justify such a suspicion. On no application made by the corps, has the merits of their case been attempted to be negatived. Their complaints have ever been allowed to be justly founded. It would be therefore saying to them ; " We know you should have relief,—we know you must be miserably distressed without it.—We also know we can have it for you, if we ask it ; but if we do make you comfortable at home ; you have neither honor nor gratitude to exert yourselves and come forward when we again have occasion for you." This would certainly be both unjust and insulting towards that body of men who form, as it were, the root from whence has proceeded all those Heroes who have flourished in British Naval History ; and from whence they must proceed in future. It would be unjust to confess the necessity and withhold the relief ; it would be insulting to withhold it on the supposition of their possessing neither integrity nor honor.

It has been, and is, confessed, and surely it cannot be controverted, that there does exist an actual necessity for an increase of the Half Pay—(for it is clear that the Lieutenants on the present Half Pay must be "*pannis obſtis panemque non habens,*"—covered with rags and destitute of bread.) The way to make them emulous for employment, is to give them pay in time of war, that would prevent them from plunging themselves into debt and distress ; that would support them with that ease and respect during their service, which is due to their wants, their station, and their rank. The withholding it is obviously impolitic. It is surely impolitic when a great nation like this wants the service of a large body of useful Officers, and cannot dispense therewith, to leave them without an object of benefit to look-up to, which ought to keep the spring of active desire always on the stretch, and cause them ever to be *soliciting* for employment, and not give room for so foul, so false an aspersion as has been basely insinuated, that of their framing feigned excuses of incapacity to serve, even though ruin does at present stare them in the face, when they obey the mandate. It is impolitic, as it has and does drive from the country, nautical abilities to the enrichment of other naval powers, who have and do profit by such oppressive injustice. The *supposition*, to which these remarks apply, implicates the idea which the Advertisement from the Admiralty have held, that the *Half Pay* is given as a *retaining fee*. If so, if it is expected that the Lieutenants should always hold themselves in readiness to come forward when called upon ; surely that *retaining fee* should be sufficient to enable them to live as becomes their station, during the cessation of duty ; that should make them feel a pleasure and a pride, and not a disgust and shame at being in the service. If it is a *retaining fee*, and that *fee* was ample, as there must then certainly be a power of deprivation in the Admiralty, in case of a refusal to serve, or in other words, a false reason assigned ; the apprehension of losing that ample provision in peace, and if added thereto the encouragement of a sufficient appointment when employed, there could be no apprehension of a tardiness in coming forward. But is there not a more certain prevention of this *imaginary* imposition in a plea of inability to serve ? Might not the certificate of a medical man be rendered more satisfactory ? The same cautionary prudence which, by the late arrangement, requires an Officer to swear that he has travelled the nearest road to his place of destination, might exact an oath from himself in confirmation of a medical man's certificate, founded on his representations. No greater security is required, or can be given for his allegiance and fidelity to his sovereign and his country.

If the *Half-Pay* is not a *retaining fee*, but a *reward for past services*, the services and the reward will not bear comparison ; and the Admiralty advertisements holding out threats to the officers who do not come forward, would become nugatory and contemptible.—It is hoped these observations will sufficiently refute such a detractive, dishonorable malignant insinuation against a body of deserving men, who have incontestably evinced the falsehood of it, by standing forward with the utmost alacrity on every occasion, in spite of all the difficulties that were apparent. This assertion has been amply testified by hundreds of repeated and fruitless applications for employment.

Under the circumstances and facts thus related, impeded, as they have been, from coming forward, as they originally intended, with an appeal to the justice and humanity of the Honorable the House of Commons of Great Britain, collectively ; this method is taken of making known the situation of the Lieutenants to the Representatives of the nation individually. It is addressed to those who are well informed, as to the nature and value of their services ; to those who will readily conceive and feel commiseration for their distress ; to those who are the best judges of the power of the nation to reward public services, and of the disposition of the people towards that Navy which secures to them their trade, their constitution and their liberties. The fullest confidence is indulged, that what the judgment approves, will be cherished and supported by the impulse of the heart ; that the cause of this class of unfortunate Officers will be warmly espoused by benevolence, generosity, and justice ; that numerous friends to the corps will make use of such means as the rules and customs of Parliament prescribed to bring the subject into immediate discussion. A real and just idea may then be represented to general view, of their unexaggerated grievances, and from that great liberality which has ever, in similar cases, marked the resolves of the British senate, it cannot be doubted but that the Lieutenants will experience such relief, as they can with reason and propriety indulge the hope of obtaining.

For ourselves and our Brother Officers, now employed in the service of their country, in various parts of the world, we have the honor to be, with the utmost deference and respect,

Your most obedient,

And very humble Servants,

The LIEUTENANTS of the NAVY.

APPEAL

OF THE

LIEUTENANTS

OF THE

ROYAL NAVY.